



Department of Pesticide Regulation



Mary-Ann Warmerdam
Director

Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

April 24, 2007

TO: INTERESTED PARTIES

SUBJECT: METHYL ISOTHIOCYANATE (MITC) CONTROL MEASURES

The Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) is proposing added control measures to reduce risks from exposure to methyl isothiocyanate (MITC). These acute (that is, short-term) exposures might occur near applications with pesticides that emit MITC. MITC is a breakdown product of metam-sodium and metam-potassium, two pesticides used to fumigate soil before planting crops (for example, carrots, peppers, potatoes, tomatoes, and other vegetable crops). The pesticides are applied through sprinkler, drip, or flood irrigation systems, injected into the soil, or sprayed on the soil surface and mixed in with a rotary tiller. When they contact warm, moist soil, they break down quickly to MITC and other volatile gases.

This proposal will address sprinkler and soil injection (that is, shank) application methods, which make up a majority of the uses. (DPR will address flood, drip and rotary tiller application methods after it completes a review of additional scientific monitoring data.) This proposal will not address minor, non-agricultural applications such as sewer pipe and utility pole treatments; these applications are made in controlled settings and the off-site exposure to the public is expected to be minor.

DPR plans statewide regulations for MITC-generating pesticides in 2008. But to get control measures in place as quickly as possible, they will be issued first as permit conditions. MITC-generating pesticides are restricted materials and require a permit from the County Agricultural Commissioner (CAC) before they can be used. For certain restricted materials, DPR develops control measures that can be added to permits. DPR plans to send suggested permit conditions for MITC-generating pesticides to CACs to use when they issue permits this fall and winter. Before we do that, we are asking for public comment on the proposed control measures. DPR is interested in getting input on the effectiveness of the control measures it is proposing to prevent incidents from occurring, and the impact these measures may have on applicators and growers. We are also interested in suggestions for alternative approaches that are equally effective in reducing MITC exposures.

A handout, "What You Need To Know About Extra Control Measures for MITC," summarizes the proposal, explains how to get more detailed information, and tells where to submit comments. The handout and proposal are available on our Web site, www.cdpr.ca.gov, click on the "Decisions Pending and Opportunities for Public Participation" link. If you want a copy of the handout and proposal sent to you via postal mail or e-mail, call 916-445-4222, or write the Worker Health and Safety Branch, Department of Pesticide Regulation, 1001 I Street, P.O. Box 4015, Sacramento, CA 95812.



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Community Workshops: DPR will hold two community workshops on May 30 to get comments on the proposed control measures.

Date: May 30, 2007

Time: First workshop: 1:00-3:30 PM (Doors Open at 12:30 PM)
Second workshop: 7:00-9:30 PM (Doors Open at 6:30 PM)

(DPR staff will be available for a half hour before and after the workshops to register participants and answer individual questions about the proposal.)

Location: Tulare County Agricultural Commissioner/Sealer
Agricultural Building Auditorium
4437 South Laspina Street
Tulare, California 93274

Technical Briefings: To widen opportunities for public comment, DPR will also hold several technical meetings this spring and summer. These meetings will focus on specific commodities and application restrictions. The meetings have not yet been scheduled. More information on the technical meetings can be found on DPR's Web site, www.cdpr.ca.gov, click on the red "Air" Quick Finder in the center of the page, then "Fumigant Resource Center," and then "Regulatory Issues."

Comment Period: Anyone may send written comments (via letter, e-mail or fax) on all or part of the proposed control measures. Comments should be sent to DPR by June 30, 2007, to Linda O'Connell, Department of Pesticide Regulation, Worker Health and Safety Branch, 1001 I Street, P.O. Box 4015, Sacramento, CA 95812, or by e-mail to loconnell@cdpr.ca.gov, or by fax number at (916) 445-4280.

After the comment period closes, DPR may revise the control measures in response to comments. The Department's goal is protect public health; however we recognize that alternative methods of carrying out this goal may be suggested by commenters and may be equally effective. DPR will finalize the control measures with this in mind.

More Information: If you have questions, please contact Linda O'Connell from my staff at (916) 445-4222, or by e-mail at loconnell@cdpr.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

(original signed by C. Andrews)

Charles M. Andrews, Chief
Worker Health and Safety Branch
(916) 445-4222